peculiar connection with Christianity and their contacts with foreigners in the lower reaches of the Yangtze, the T'ai P'ings have attracted more notice from Western historians of China than they deserve. They constituted only one of a number of revolts of these troubled years. About 1856 there broke out in Yiinnan an uprising among the large Moslem population, due to a clash between themselves and their non-Moslem neighbors. The non-Chinese tribes of the region took the opportunity to harass the Chinese population, against whom they had many grievances.

There were numerous other rebel bands in various parts of the country, among them the Nienfei, who were widely spread, particularly in the North. In the Northwest the Moslems were restless. What had happened many times before was happening again. As the ruling house became weak, revolt raised its head.

TAO KUANG AND HSIEN FENG

Had the Ch'ing dynasty possessed such leaders as K'ang Hsi or Ch'ien Lung, the disasters which the nation suffered at the hands of foreigners and rebels might never have overtaken it. To be sure, the growth of population and the consequent economic pressure which were so basic a cause Jfcthe internal unrest could not have been averted by a strong adfflnistration: in a very real sense they were a product of it. A K'ang Hsi or a Ch'ien Lung, indeed, by putting up a more stubborn resistance to Western powers than did Tao Kuang and Hsien Feng, might conceivably have been ultimately defeated more overwhelmingly by the West, with greater immediate disaster to the country. It is certain, however, that K'ang Hsi or Ch'ien Lung would have handled the situation with more vigor than did their

incompetent descendants, and it is not improbable that they would have dealt with it more wisely.

As it was, the Ch'ing was in that period of decline which appears to be the inevitable fate of all ruling families. Such was the Chinese system of government, where so much depended on the monarch, that both the dynasty and the Empire, with mediocrity or worse at the helm, stumbled into defeat and almost into disintegration. The Emperor whose reign period bore the name of the Tao Kuang had been unable to save his realm from defeat at the hands of Great Britain in 1839-1842 and was troubled bv